



NEWS RELEASE

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West Branch Water Safety Bonanza Annual Event set for Saturday

Swimmers, boaters and anyone who enjoys spending time at the lake are encouraged to come out for the annual West Branch Water Safety Bonanza held Saturday, June 25th from noon to 3:00pm at West Branch State Park Main Swim Beach. This is the second year for the free event which drew nearly 400 participants last year and is put on through the coordination between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and West Branch State Park.

“We’ve put together a fun-filled event this year packed full of games, activities, boat rides, prizes and more,” promised Corps Park Ranger Julie Stone. Featured will be pontoon boat and Jet Ski rides, a helicopter landing at 1:30pm and a special appearance from Bobber the Water Safety Dog. Coastie the tug boat will be running about to remind kids to wear their lifejacket as well. Contest activities include knot-tying and tug-o-war competitions, races, and a challenge course.

Event participants will receive a raffle ticket each time they take part in an activity or game. At the end of the event a drawing will be held to determine the winners. Prizes include free camping, a pontoon rental, and gift certificates for boating and outdoor gear.

Local service agencies contributing to the event include: Ohio Division of Watercraft, Ohio State Police, Portage County Sheriff’s Department Marine Patrol, Charlestown Fire Department, Brimfield Police Department, MedFlight of Ohio, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and local business partners West Branch Marina and Ravenna Marine.

“The focus of the day is to have fun while learning to be safe when in, on or near the water,” said Stone. “We want folks to know that they can have a blast recreating at the lake, but they need to always keep water safety in mind while doing it.”

Parents will be able to pick up free Identi-Kits from the Portage County Sheriff’s Marine Patrol booth and the Camper Friends of West Branch State Park will be selling food at the concession stand. For more information contact Stone at the Corps of Engineers Office at 330-358-2622 or check the Michael J. Kirwan Dam and Reservoir Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MJKirwanDam.